

EXHIBIT A

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PUBLIC BROADCASTING REPORT

March 24, 2000, Friday

SECTION: Programming

LENGTH: 159 words

BODY:

Frontline settled suit by Al-Haramain Foundation, agreeing to edit references to Saudi-financed charity out of future airings of "The Terrorist and The Superpower" and to urge stations not to show earlier version. No money changed hands. WGBH Boston's Frontline was planning to edit reference out anyway, spokeswoman said, since CIA investigation found no evidence Al-Haramain participated in plot to blow up U.S. embassy in Kenya in 1998. Report of CIA investigation in program that aired in April of last year was "true," she said, but "we decided it was no longer relevant." Version that re-aired March 21 under new title "The Search For Bin-Laden" began with statement that Frontline "did not mean to suggest that the Al-Haramain Foundation...participated in any such plot." Spokeswoman said Frontline stands by its reporting "but we were happy to clarify." If not for planned re-edit, she said, "I don't know what the outcome would have been."

LOAD-DATE: March 27, 2000

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The Associated Press State & Local Wire

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March 22, 2000, Wednesday, PM cycle

SECTION: State and Regional

LENGTH: 118 words

HEADLINE: WGBH-TV agrees to edit program to clear Saudi charity

DATELINE: BOSTON

BODY:

WGBH-TV has edited a 1999 "Frontline" episode to remove any suggestions an Islamic organization was involved in the bombing of the U.S. embassy in Nairobi, Kenya.

In the original program, Frontline reported the CIA had conducted an investigation of employees of a Saudi-financed charity for their possible involvement in the 1998 bomb plot.

The program identified the Al Haramain Foundation, a Saudi-based organization, as the charity. Those references have been taken out for rebroadcast after the foundation complained.

In a statement preceding the edited version of "The Terrorist and The Superpower," Frontline says "it did not intend to suggest" the charity participated in the bombing.

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The Boston Globe

March 22, 2000, Wednesday ,THIRD EDITION

SECTION: NATIONAL/FOREIGN; Pg. A8

LENGTH: 661 words

HEADLINE: 'FRONTLINE' RETRACTS SUGGESTIONS ON BOMBING

BYLINE: By Don Aucoin, Globe Staff

BODY:

In a program rebroadcast last night, the WGBH-produced documentary series "Frontline" removed references to a Saudi Arabia-based charity as a possible suspect in the 1998 bombing of the US Embassy in Kenya.

WGBH took the step under the threat of legal action from the Al Haramain Foundation, which retained a powerful Washington law firm to press its objections to a program titled "The Terrorist and the Superpower," that aired which first aired last April. In the edited and retitled version broadcast last night, "Frontline" also included a statement that the producers "did not intend to suggest that the Al-Haramain Al Haramain Foundation . . . participated in any such plot, including the August 1998 bombing of the US Embassy." The statement was also posted on the "Frontline" Web site.

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"We think this is a fair settlement," said attorney Mark J. MacDougall of Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld.

"Frontline" executive producer Mike Sullivan said last night that the program revisions were journalistically valid because the original broadcast was "incomplete."

"We didn't have all the information or we would have reported it differently," he said. Since the charity had been "cleared, they're no longer relevant to the story."

The episode in question was coproduced by The New York Times, whose parent company owns The Boston Globe. However, the foundation and its attorneys confined their efforts to "Frontline" and WGBH, Boston's public TV station.

"Frontline's decision was its own," said Times spokeswoman Nancy Nielsen. "We were not approached by the Al Haramain Foundation, and its concerns did not involve what we printed in the Times."

The version of the program broadcast last night was titled "Hunting bin Laden" and included updated information, along with the revisions. In the Boston area, it was not shown on WGBH (Channel 2) because of previously scheduled programs related to the station's pledge drive.

In August 1998, the American Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, was attacked with car bombs, killing 12 US diplomats and more than 200 Africans. US officials blame Saudi fugitive Osama bin Laden for planning the attack.

The original version of the "Frontline" program said "the CIA discovered a bomb plot involving employees of a Saudi-financed Muslim charity." The program then flashed a picture of the logo of the Al Haramain Foundation. ←

But by April 13, 1999, when the program aired, it had been several months since the CIA had dropped its investigation of the charity. A Jan. 9, 1999, story in The New York Times reported that investigators concluded that "the files seized from the group's office showed no evidence of a bombing plot" and that the CIA came to believe the informant who linked the group to the bombing "was not credible." ←

"The good works of the Al Haramain Foundation have suffered as a result of the misstatements made by 'Frontline' in its broadcast," said a statement by Soliman al-Buthi, chairman of U.S.A. Committee of the Al Haramain Foundation. "Al Haramain has never had any relationship with any terrorist group. We hope that this settlement and the steps that WGBH-TV is taking will fully correct the record."

LOAD-DATE: March 22, 2000

National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States

Chapter 7

Al Haramain Case Study

The al Haramain Islamic Foundation (al Haramain or HIF) is one of the most important and prominent Saudi charities.¹²⁶ Al Haramain has been on the radar screen of the U.S. government as a potential terrorist-financing problem since the mid- to late 1990s, when the U.S. government started to develop evidence that certain employees and branch offices might be supporting al Qaeda and related terrorist groups.¹²⁷

The U.S. government, however, never moved against al Haramain or pushed the Saudi government to do so until after 9/11. Terrorist financing simply was not a priority in its bilateral relationship with the Saudis before 9/11. Even when discussing terrorist financing with the Saudis, the U.S. government was more concerned about issues other than Saudi charities and al Haramain.¹²⁸ Meanwhile, the Saudis were content to leave the issue unexplored.

After the 9/11 attacks, a more focused U.S. government sought to work with the Saudis to stem the flow of funds from al Haramain to al Qaeda and related terrorist groups. Progress was initially slow; though some U.S.-Saudi cooperation on al Haramain occurred within the first six months after 9/11, it was not until the spring of 2003 that the U.S. government and the Saudi government began to make real strides in working together to thwart al Haramain.

Background

Al Haramain, a Saudi Arabia-based nonprofit organization established in the early 1990s, has been described by several former U.S. government officials as the "United Way" of Saudi Arabia. It exists to promote Wahhabi Islam by funding religious education, mosques, and humanitarian projects around the world.¹²⁹

At its peak, al Haramain had a presence in at least 50 countries. Al Haramain's main headquarters are in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, but it maintains branch offices in a number of

¹²⁶ See chapter 1 for the scope of this analysis.

¹²⁷ This chapter is derived from a review of internal government document and interviews with government policy makers. It was especially aided by the commission staff's ability to access and review NSC subgroup minutes of meetings, as well as internal memoranda from the NSC, State, Treasury and the intelligence community.

¹²⁸ Our investigation has focused on al Haramain in the context of al Qaeda financing. Although much of our analysis may apply to the financing of other terrorist groups, we have made no systematic effort to investigate any of those groups, and we recognize that the financing of other terrorist groups may present the U.S. and Saudi governments with problems or opportunities not existing in the context of al Qaeda.

¹²⁹ The Web site uses the term *salafi*, which is the preferred term of Saudi practitioners of Wahhabism. Some argue that Wahhabism is a virulent form of religious extremism, while others have a more benign view of it. See chapter 2 for more information.

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countries to facilitate the distribution of charitable funds. Some of these offices are staffed by Saudi citizens; others are managed by the nationals of the countries involved. Estimates of its budget range from \$30 to \$80 million. It claims to have constructed more than 1,299 mosques, it funds imams and others to work in the mosques, and it sponsors more than 3,000 "callers to Islam" for tours of duty in different locations "to teach the people good and to warn them from wrongs." HIF provides meals and assistance to Muslims around the world, distributes books and pamphlets, pays for potable water projects, sets up and equips medical facilities, and operates more than 20 orphanages.

Although both the Saudi government and al Haramain say that it is a private organization, al Haramain has considerable ties to the Saudi government. Two government ministers have supervisory roles (nominal or otherwise) over al Haramain, and there is some evidence that low-level Saudi officials had substantial influence over various HIF offices outside of Saudi Arabia. The Saudi government has also historically provided financial support to al Haramain, although that may have diminished in recent years.

Charity and charitable organizations, like al Haramain, are extremely important to Saudi society. As discussed in more detail in chapter 2, religious and civic duty and government and religious functions in Saudi Arabia are intertwined. This dynamic creates complications for the Saudi government as it seeks to stem the flow of funds from Saudi Arabia to al Qaeda and related terrorist groups, and difficulties for the U.S. government as it seeks to engage the Saudis on terrorist financing.

Before 9/11

After the East Africa bombings in the summer of 1998, the U.S. government began to give more attention to terrorist financing. The National Security Council established a subgroup of the Counterterrorism Security Group to focus the U.S. government's efforts on terrorist financing.¹³⁰ As a result of this focus, and the consequent discovery that al Qaeda was not financed from Bin Ladin's personal wealth, the NSC became increasingly interested in Saudi charities and Bin Ladin's use of charities to fund terrorism.¹³¹

By no later than 1996, the U.S. intelligence community began to gather intelligence that certain branches of HIF were involved in financing terrorism. Later, the U.S. intelligence community began to draw links among HIF, the 1998 East Africa bombings, jihad actions in the Balkans, Chechnya, and Azerbaijan, and support for al Qaeda generally. The United States shared some of its information with the Saudis in an effort to spur action, including evidence that al Haramain officials and employees in East Africa may have been involved in the planning of the 1998 embassy bombings. The United States sought information and reports from the Saudis on employees of al Haramain around the globe and their connections to Bin Ladin, but received no substantive responses.

¹³⁰ Terrorist financing was also a component of the larger strategic plan Richard Clarke developed after the embassy bombings.

¹³¹ The U.S. government's efforts to understand al Qaeda financing, and its engagement with Saudi Arabia, are described in chapter 3.